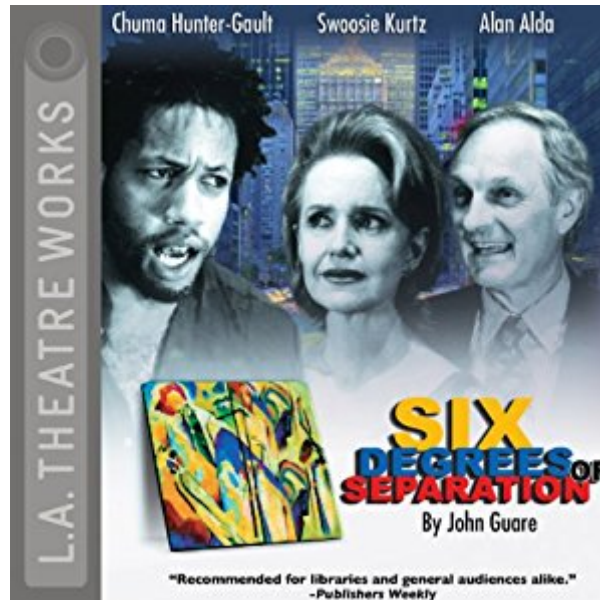




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Six Degrees Of Separation



Synopsis

The extraordinary tragicomedy of race, class and manners. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 1 hour and 21 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Original recording

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Customer Reviews

This is a beautifully written play. And wonderful to read. The fact that I saw Stockard Channing in the original and can hear her as I read it, probably helps.

While I never get as much reward from reading a play as a novel, I did find the message awesome, John Guare makes us THINK, and that's important.

John Guare has created a witty, creative, funny, and tragic play with his SIX DEGREES OF SEPERATION, based upon the true story of a wealthy Manhattan couple who are fooled into allowing a con-man who claims to be a friend of their Harvard children, and the son of actor Sideny Potier into their home. Paul, the con-man in question, is a homosexual who has previously seduced a lover into telling him secrets about people in this upper-class Manahatten community. Paul even goes so far as to stabbing himself and claiming that he was mugged for his briefcase. Mr. guare has adapted this story to the playbook with astoinding creativity and brilliance. His characters grow and learn with each passing scene. Mr. Guare is an incredible author who has built a beautiful world on the stage. I can't imagine how wonderful a sight this must be when seen live. SIX DEGREES OF SEPERATION is essential when studying or performing modern theater. Nothing this decade has

stood out as much as this play.

Six Degrees is a weird little play. The way the characters are directed to regularly speak to the audience to relay past events or what has transpired between scenes is really interesting--not only because that means they don't have to stage those moments, but because you can then hear the presentation of the ideas from the character's point of view (or, more often, the way it seems to the characters as they talk over each other to tell you what's going on). The character of Paul is captivating--even after his stories come unraveled, you keep feeling like you should believe him--just like the characters in the story kept doing, even after he betrayed them. (Most notably, Ouisa still wants to help him as he states his case when they're talking on the phone, even though he misrepresented himself to her and her husband, used their bedroom and their money to hire a sex worker, and lied about being able to get them a role in the film version of *Cats*.) It was pretty incredible that he was able to so convincingly portray a downtrodden victim who just happened to know their children from school--and how premeditated everything was even though it counted on their spontaneous kindness. I also appreciated the commentary on race (especially when Paul said he would not be treated well in jail or by the justice system because he is black), and how he used manufactured prejudice to create outrage against the very people who helped him. I was actually sort of surprised by how much rough language and random sexual content was braided into this short play, though I don't know why I was expecting otherwise.

Loosely based upon real events, *SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* is a dramatic comedy that explores the deep interconnectivity of people while at the same time illustrating how shallow our quest for fame and fortune often is. The play tells the story of Flan and Ouisa Kittredge, an upper class Manhattan couple. The Kittredges are art dealers, but they've about run out of funds and unless they sell something soon, they might have to downgrade their lifestyle. One evening while they are having a friend from South Africa over for dinner (and trying to get some money from him), a young black man appears on their doorstep. He claims to have been mugged in Central Park and that he is a college friend of their kids. The initial tension soon dissolves when Paul, the young black man, begins cooking them dinner and lets slip that his father is Sidney Poitier. Paul makes everyone feel better about themselves and the Kittredges agree to let Paul spend the night in their apartment. However, things begin to unravel when the Kittredges find Paul having sex with a man the next morning. They throw Paul out and they think that's the end of it until later they learn of acquaintances who have been duped by Paul in similar ways. Thus begins a quest to find out who

Paul really is and in doing so the Kittredges discover themselves. I think SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION is a great play. Most of the characters are pretentious and snobbish and at times not very likeable. However, they have no idea that they are pretentious, they think they are charming, and very likeable. The irony is that it takes a con man who no one really knows to help them take their own masks off and truly see themselves for the first time. Even if the plot of the play doesn't sound interesting, the play is worth reading and knowing about because of introducing the concept of "six degrees of separation" into the lexicon. The concept had existed before, but only in vague terms. It wasn't until John Guare's play that the idea became commonplace and a part of American culture. Overall, a fairly entertaining and thought-provoking play that anyone with an interest in American theatre should read.

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